



OFFICES

A Statement

by

Her Majesty's Government

4th November, 1964



LONDON

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

SIXPENCE NET

OFFICES : A STATEMENT BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

The Government have promised a system of comprehensive regional planning directed to providing a fresh social environment in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the time.

2. The Government's first action in this field is designed to check the continued growth of offices in South-East England, especially in London, and thus to relieve congestion, and secure a better distribution of employment and a better use of resources.

3. South-East England, with about one-third of Great Britain's population, has accounted for over half of the total increase in employees over the past decade. About three-quarters of South-East employment growth has occurred within the London Metropolitan Region.

4. There is little prospect of housing adequately inside London more than the 8 million people who live there at present, yet employment in London has been increasing at a rate of over 40,000 a year. Office growth has been the main cause, and this has, until recently, been largely concentrated in or adjoining Central London and has resulted in nearly 200,000 more office jobs there since 1951.

5. Outstanding planning permissions together with existing use rights under the Third Schedule of the Town and Country Planning Acts could result in over a quarter of a million further office jobs in London, half of them in Central London. The road and rail system into London is already severely congested, and we cannot afford the heavy capital investment on the new works which would be necessary to cope with the journey-to-work pressures resulting from all this additional office employment.

6. So we have to call a halt to this rapid growth. First we must have a standstill on new offices in London. To this end, the Government will shortly be introducing a Bill under which, in stated areas, any new offices will require, in addition to the normal planning permission, Office Development Permits from the Board of Trade, for both new building and change of use. The Bill will provide for areas to be designated as the need arises.

7. The control will be applied with particular stringency in the Greater London Council area. In general no permits will be granted here except in very special circumstances. Permits for new buildings will be required even if planning permission has been given, unless a contract to build has been entered into before 5th November. Permits will also be required in the case of change of use, unless planning permission has been given before 5th November.

8. In the rest of the London Metropolitan Region (*i.e.*, the area roughly within 40 miles of Charing Cross) a permit will be required for new office building or change of use of existing buildings to offices in all cases where planning permission has not been given before 5th November.

9. The intention is therefore that the London Metropolitan Region shall be the first area to be designated, and that, for this region, the Bill shall have retrospective effect from midnight on 4th/5th November.

10. Compensation will not be payable where a permit is withheld.

11. Powers will be taken to exempt from the control offices of less than a certain size. Within the Metropolitan Region it is intended that buildings of less than 2,500 sq. ft. shall initially be exempt.

12. Office development can make a valuable contribution to the economic strength and balance of employment in other regions than the South-East. We propose therefore to commission comprehensive studies designed to throw light on the scope for moving offices right outside the South-East, and on the considerations which should govern their location in other parts of the country. We intend to examine with the Greater London Council the whole employment situation in London in relation to housing, transport and other services in order to determine what level of office employment is acceptable in the long-term.

13. The new controls, while they will relieve pressure on certain congested areas, will not reduce the total demand on the construction industry. The Government's policy is to promote the rapid expansion of this key industry, so that the nation's essential social and economic needs can be met.